

## Planning Notes

**Location:** Sharon Town Hall

**Date:** February 11, 2008

**Time:** 6:30pm-8:30pm

**Purpose:** Comprehensive Plan

**Present:** Ray Parsons, Bernadetta Vrooman, Debora Cross, Gene Cechnicki, Pam Tichy, Lori Nolfo, Brian Fleury and Lillian Bruno

**Absent:** Bob Spohn

### **Notes:**

**Discussion regarding the survey:** There was discussion that our Agency provided several media outlets for the extension of the survey due to problems with the bulk mailing. There were survey extension postings at the library, town hall, banks, etc; to inform residents of the extension. There was also an advertisement on SCHOPEG. There was concern that several residents still have not received a survey. A call was made to the Postmaster and it was stated that a bulk of surveys arrived on January 18, 2008. It was mentioned that the last time there was correspondence with Bob Augerstan there was at least 10% received, so the Committee has met the threshold to validate the survey. The Committee did the best job they could to send out surveys; it was a fluke with the bulk mailing. After the Committee receives the results, the work will really start to begin.

**Discussion regarding zoning:** Jerry Weiss, Code Enforcement Officer for the Town of Sharon had mentioned to the Planning Board that there was concern with the definition of a mobile home in there zoning law. It was discussed that a Comprehensive Plan can facilitate in amending the current Town of Sharon Zoning Law. It was noted that the current zoning law works well; it just needs to be adjusted in a few areas.

**Discussion regarding the Comprehensive Plan Document:** There was discussion that Bob Augustan has completed a lot of the preliminary data for the comprehensive plan. Such as, demographics, history, etc. The Committee felt they liked the City of Oneonta's Comprehensive design ideas: a vertical and spiral bounded plan. There was much enthusiasm and interest in providing historical pictures of Sharon. There was discussion that Jackie Lotus and Sandy Manko would be able to provide a plethora of material for the plan. There was also

discussion for involving art students at the school for design ideas. The Committee would love to create a document that is used rather than just sit on a shelf.

**Discussion regarding the next Public Meeting:** A public meeting in the summer could be proposed to allow residents time to review survey results and take a look at the draft plan. It is an opportunity to hear comment from the public in case there is something lacking such as, mergers.

**Discussion regarding mergers:** There was concern that the topic of mergers for municipal services was not addressed in the comprehensive plan survey. This could be a discussion that we could have in the summer public meeting to receive input from the public. There is usually a strong consensus that usually 1/2 agree with mergers and 1/2 do not. There was discussion regarding that the Town and Village Planning Board merger is going well and there was discussion that they may merge the Zoning Board of Appeals, as well. The Town and Village can work together to accomplish goals. There was discussion that the Town is weary of merging with the Village due to the water and sewer district. That this is a hurdle and unsure if they want to attempt to take on right now. It was discussed that the Town and Village could merge their highway departments and sanitation services. It can create less duplication of services, but it can create a loss of self and identity, as many residents felt when there was talk of a school merger. Our Agency will contact Town and Village clerk's to get operating budgets to review. This is topic that we will gather more information on and continue to ponder the benefits and weaknesses of merging municipalities.

**Discussion regarding roads:** There was discussion regarding the concepts of seasonal and abandoned roads. This topic pertains to allowing subdivision to be built on seasonal roads and to make sure subdivisions are having roads developed to Town highway specifications.

**Discussion regarding goals of the Comprehensive Plan:** The Committee as a whole would like to maintain the Town of Sharon as open space and farm agricultural land while allowing a light industrial zone to be concentrated along Route 20. The Committee does not want to see large, mass residential areas taking over the farms (tack houses and cluster development). The Committee would also like to see planned protection of quality of life. They would like to keep that quiet, rural community. They Committee also does not want to live in the dark ages. They believe just because you are small and rural, there should still be quality education, cable and internet access. They did not want the Town of Sharon to become a "Little Guilderland". By keeping this open space they still do not want to take away property owners rights to sell their farms if they have to for residential and/or industrial development. Our Agency will provide some examples of residential zoning designs for the Committee to review.

**Discussion regarding maps:** The Committee at future meetings would like to examine maps to find sensitive areas, where development can take place due to

soil types and where suitable zoning districts could be created. The maps will allow the Committee to paint a picture using a soil profile to see where certain developments can take place.

**Discussion regarding water:** The Committee discussed that future developments have to consider water. There are areas in Sharon that have salt and sulfur. Some resident's wells are beginning run dry. The Committee would like to examine this issue further.

**Discussion regarding Land Trusts:** The Committee would also like to meet with the Schoharie County Land Trust in order to gather more information on this subject to determine if this is a tool that would be effective for the Town of Sharon to utilize to conserve open space.

**Discussion regarding Costs of Services:** The Committee asked if the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency could gather more information on Cost of Services. There is a misconception that residential development improves tax base for the Town versus leaving the land as open space.

**Discussion regarding correlating questions:** The committee was asked to review the survey and see if there are questions that they would like to correlate or linked for our next meeting. The database that Southern Tier is creating should allow the Committee the opportunity to have this function to take place.

**Discussion regarding next meeting:** Next meeting the Committee would like to examine survey results and it was recommended that a new advertisement be placed in the Times Journal, The Weekly Marketplace and the County website to let residents know that the meetings are now being held in the "new" Town Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM